



## Proposal to Restructure Entrance Fees

Yellowstone National Park is seeking public input on a proposal to increase the park's entrance fees for the first time since 2006.

Under current legislation, 80 percent of the revenue from entrance fees is allowed to remain in the park and used on projects which benefit park visitors. In Yellowstone, revenue from entrance fees has allowed the park to spend approximately \$4 million per year on a variety of projects including road repairs, campground upgrades, improving accessibility for people with disabilities, rehabilitation of park structures, and utility systems repairs.

Yellowstone is proposing several changes to park entrance fees.

Currently, visitors pay \$25 for a 7-day pass for a single, non-commercial vehicle entry into both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, with the current cost of an annual two-park pass at \$50.

The park is proposing to offer a 3-day Yellowstone only pass for \$30. A 7-day pass good for both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks would be available for \$50. An annual pass to Yellowstone only will be \$60.

Those entering the park by motorcycle or snowmobile are currently charged \$20 for a 7-day pass honored at both parks. The proposal is to offer a 3-day Yellowstone only pass valid for \$25 and a 7-day pass for \$40 honored at both parks.

Individuals who enter the park on foot, bicycle, skis, or as snowcoach passengers currently pay \$12 for a 7-day pass. That would be increased to \$15 for 1-3 days in Yellowstone, or \$25 for 7 days at both parks.

The Interagency Pass rates will remain the same: Annual (\$80), Senior (\$10), Access and Military (\$0).

These proposed changes would result in additional annual revenue of approximately \$3 million dollars for Yellowstone National Park, which would be used to continue or enhance projects such as Yellowstone cutthroat trout restoration, maintenance for the park's 7 campgrounds, preservation maintenance on park roads, improved restroom facilities, reconstruction and rehabilitation of trails including Tower Falls, and a new North Entrance Station facility.

Comments may be hand-delivered during normal business hours to the mailroom in the park's Administration Building in Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming, mailed to: Management Assistant Office, Attn: Entrance Fee Proposal, P.O. Box 168, Yellowstone National Park, WY, 82190, or on this website, <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fees>.



## Entrance Fee Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is Yellowstone National Park raising the entrance fee?**

This fee increase is part of a larger National Park Service initiative to standardize fees in similar parks across the country. Yellowstone's proposed entrance fee structure differs from the standard group rates established by the NPS Washington Office to better align with local visitation patterns. Yellowstone's current entrance fees have been in place since 2006, when a seven day pass was increased from \$20 to \$25 per vehicle. Annual appropriations alone are insufficient to provide the services visitors expect from national parks while also protecting park resources, and operating costs at Yellowstone are particularly high due to the park's remote location, 5 park entrances, 9 visitor centers, museums, and contact stations, and the staff and facilities required to support them.

### **How are entrance fees calculated?**

The NPS-wide fee initiative is a tiered approach that classifies Yellowstone National Park with parks of comparable size and visitation. The NPS analysis of fees is based on relevant academic studies, private and public sector benchmarks, and existing NPS data, and seeks to provide fair, equitable and consistent fees to the public across the National Park System. Yellowstone is part of Group 4, which generally includes larger parks with higher operating costs due to high levels of visitation and infrastructure. However, Yellowstone is proposing some adjustments to the standardized proposal to accommodate the approximately 70% of Yellowstone visitors who stay in the park for less than 4 days. The other primary change to the agency-wide fee structure is a proposal to offer independent passes for Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park, recognizing that the two parks operate and are managed entirely independently of one another.

### **What do the current fees pay for?**

The Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) of 2005 authorized 100% of the revenue generated by charging fees to be returned to the National Park Service, with 80% remaining at the site where it is collected and 20% to be used servicewide to fund programs and parks that don't collect fees. These funds are to be used in the park for projects that directly benefit visitors. Funds generated by the fees are used to accomplish projects the park has been unable to fund through annual Congressional allocations. Examples of recent park projects funded with fee revenue include projects restore native Yellowstone cutthroat trout, maintenance for the park's 7 campgrounds, and preservation maintenance on park roads.

### **How will the new fee revenues be used?**

Forecasted revenue from proposed entrance fee increases is approximately \$11.3 million annually, which is approximately \$3 million more than current entrance fee revenue. The new revenue from the fee increases will be used to provide continue and enhance visitor services including repair and maintenance of facilities, capital improvements, enhanced amenities, resource protection and additional visitor programs and services. Specifically, it will be used to enhance efforts on projects such as native cutthroat trout restoration, restroom improvements, trail reconstruction and



rehabilitation including the Tower Falls trail, campground maintenance, and preservation maintenance of park roads, and a new North Entrance Station facility.

### **When will these new fees go into effect?**

After public meetings, the park will consider public comments and release a final fee structure that will go into effect no earlier than April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. The park does have the authority to consider phasing in the implementation of new fees.

### **How does this fee compare to other national park sites?**

Yellowstone currently charges a \$25 per vehicle entrance rate. Other parks in the same “group,” meaning larger parks with higher operating costs due to high levels of visitation and infrastructure, include parks such as Yosemite, Grand Canyon, and Glacier. The servicewide proposal includes increasing the vehicle entrance rate for all these parks to \$30 for a 1-7 day pass. However, Yellowstone is currently the only park proposing to offer visitors the option to purchase a 1-3 day pass for \$30, which is expected to align with the travel plans of approximately 70% of park visitors. A 1-7 day pass for \$50 would allow visitors to enter both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

### **If I change my travel plans, can I upgrade my pass to a week-long pass or an Interagency Pass?**

Yes. Visitors will have the option of upgrading their passes in the park.

### **How will public comments be used?**

Public comments are important to the National Park Service and will be used to inform the final fee rate structure, along with considerations of park operation and maintenance costs.